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DE RUEHTC #0054/01 0231134
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 231134Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2447
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1840
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 2008

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000054

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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/21/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [NL](#) [CZ](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU: DUTCH PRIORITIES FOR JANUARY GAERC

REF: A. SECSTATE 4297
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 5430

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons
1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Dutch are looking to reactivate the EU border mission in support of Israel-Palestine peace negotiations. On Guantanamo, the EU will consider a common position, but the Dutch are not willing to accept detainees. On Ukraine/Russia, the Dutch will support continued negotiations, including a dialogue with Russia on human rights, while at the same time supporting efforts to improve energy security. In the Balkans, the Dutch do not want EU discussions to give Montenegro the impression its membership application is moving forward. Similarly, for the planned EU Eastern Partnership Summit, the Dutch want to avoid raising false expectations. Also in The Hague, Czech D/PM Vondra reviewed Czech priorities for the EU in a speech on January 20, and Embassy The Hague staff met with Czech counterparts to discuss their agenda. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Middle East: Embassy The Hague delivered reftel A and B points to key Dutch MFA contacts. In a January 21 briefing for allied diplomats, Deputy EU Correspondent Rochus Pronk noted the Middle East peace negotiations would be the primary focus of meetings in Brussels January 26-27. EU FMs would also see Israel FM Livni on January 21 and Arab FMs on January 25. Working with the Danish, the Dutch aim to reactivate the EU border mission. They do not expect an EU decision on that proposal on the 26th, although the EU could approve a related fact-finding mission.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Guantanamo: Pronk stated the EU was not likely to approve conclusions on Guantanamo but will discuss whether the EU could support a common position. The Dutch are not willing to accept detainees but will consider helping with repatriation efforts. The Dutch MFA has made similar public statements to the Dutch parliament over the last week. (Note: Some opposition parliamentarians appear willing to accept detainees, but the ruling coalition parties supported the MFA position in a January 22 debate. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (C) Ukraine-Russia: Pronk stated the Dutch want to continue negotiations with Russia, including a dialogue on human rights. Although Pronk does not expect GAERC conclusions, the EU may consider efforts to boost energy security. Cees Bansema, head of the MFA EU internal affairs division and also briefing allied diplomats with Pronk, noted the Dutch would continue to push for increased gas "connectivity" and efforts to diversify fuel sources. In an aside, however, Bansema noted these efforts don't "resolve Russia's unfair game."

[1](#)5. (SBU) Balkans: Pronk was unsure of the Czech presidency's plans on the Balkans -- Kosovo was on the agenda, then off -- but he understood the EU may consider Montenegro's December

15 application before the EU and ask for a formal opinion on the application. The Dutch would oppose that move as premature, believing the EU should focus on the current "association relationship."

¶16. (U) Eastern Partnership: Similarly, Bansema noted the Netherlands supports engaging Europe's neighbors, as the Czechs have proposed for their May 7 Eastern Partnership Summit, but they do not want to create false expectations that these meetings will lead to EU accession. In addition, the Dutch do not want to increase the planned budget for engaging with Eastern Europe.

¶17. (U) Visit of Czech D/PM Vondra: Speaking to roughly 100 diplomats and academics in The Hague on January 20, Czech D/PM Vondra outlined his nation's agenda for the EU presidency, including the "3 Es" theme of economy, energy, and external relations. Dutch MFA State Secretary for European Affairs responded with praise for Vondra's experience as a dissident during Soviet times, and by noting Dutch support for Czech priorities. At the same time, Timmermans would have added a "fourth E," for the environment and global warming, "the existential challenge of our times." Vondra and Timmermans acknowledged relative Czech enthusiasm and Dutch caution on the issue of EU enlargement.

¶18. (U) Czech diplomats in The Hague: The Czech DCM, political officer and economic officer met with econ head, poldep, and econoff on January 9 to discuss priorities for the EU presidency. Regarding policy, the Czechs expect Dutch support on many issues, including human rights and a planned EU-Israel Summit. However, the Czechs disagree with the Dutch opposition to closer EU ties to Serbia pending Serbian cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The Czechs were not sure how hard the Czech leadership would push the Netherlands on this issue, but the Czech team in The Hague is "not pushing really hard." Also on Eastern Europe, the Czechs would support an offer of a NATO Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia, but "Germany would block" that effort. The Czechs would like to see the accession of Croatia as soon as possible, but the bilateral dispute between Slovenia and Croatia will probably delay that effort until after Sweden's EU presidency. On Russia, the Czechs may take a more critical line than the Netherlands. On Cuba, the Czechs are considering a visit by their FM to Havana, or a side meeting during the Rio Group gathering. At the same time, the Czechs are willing to return to sanctions against the regime depending on the EU policy assessment in June. Czech President Klaus plans to visit the Netherlands in March, on travel unrelated to the EU presidency. The Czechs hope for an early April visit to Prague by the POTUS.
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